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Is AI an Author, an Editor or a Mirror?

4 min read · Jun 24, 2026

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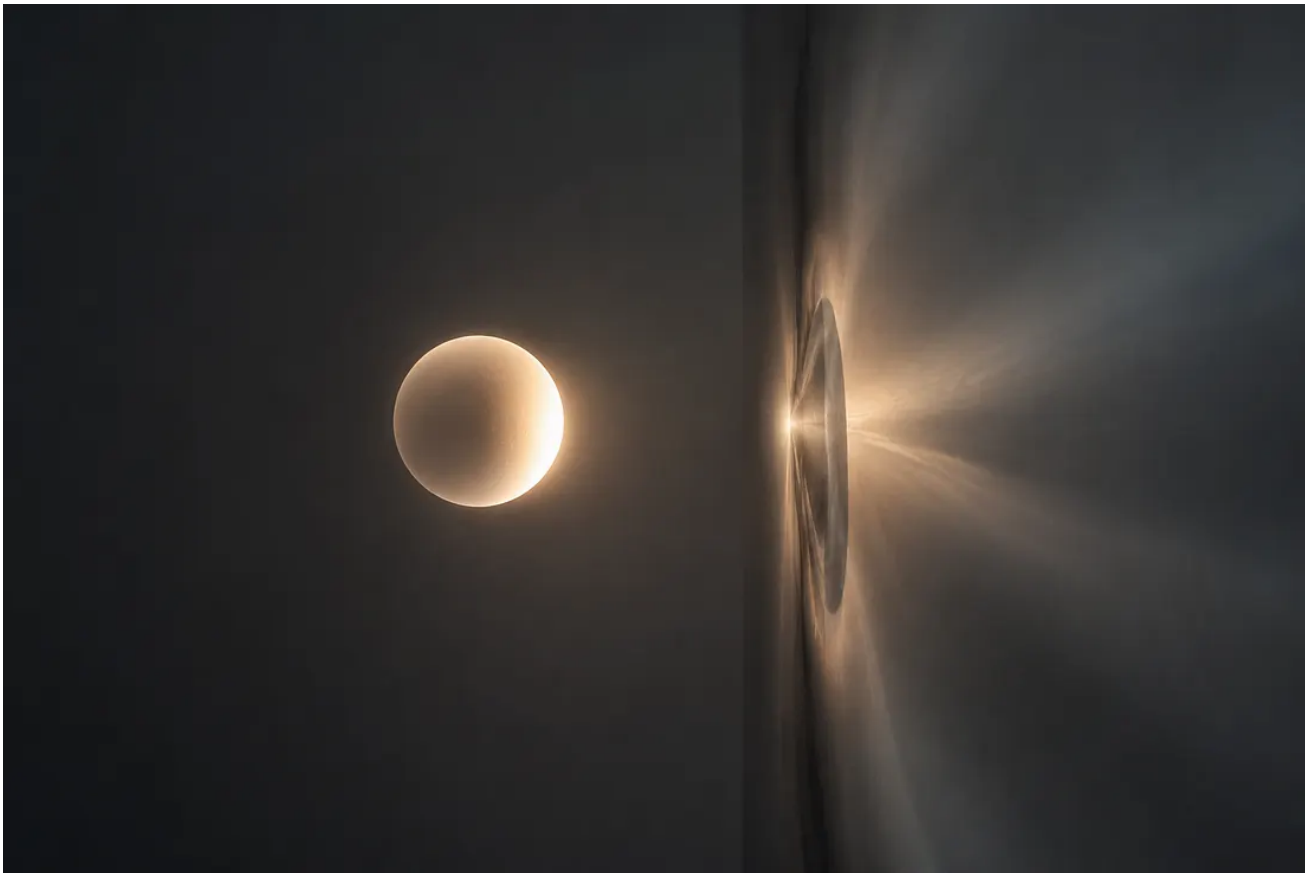


Introduction

Current debates about artificial intelligence often focus on a technical question:

Was a text written by a human or by a machine?

This question has given rise to various detection tools, such as GPTZero. Yet behind it may lie a deeper issue: what are we really evaluating when we read a

text?

The value of a text does not reside solely in its writing, but in the extent to which its author is able to intellectually stand behind every sentence.

From this perspective, several ideas deserve closer examination.

1. The Confusion Between Writing Quality and Evidence of AI Use

AI-generated text detectors rely on statistical criteria. They do not know who wrote a text; they merely measure how closely it resembles certain linguistic patterns.

This logic can sometimes lead to a troubling confusion: a clear, well-structured, and rigorously argued text may become suspect precisely because of its writing quality.

We thus arrive at a situation where excellence of form is treated as presumptive evidence of artificial assistance.

2. The Risk of Changing Writing Standards

If authors begin to deliberately simplify their style in order to avoid being identified as AI users, the issue extends beyond a purely technical concern.

The risk is no longer merely one of inaccurate detection. It becomes cultural.

Rich, precise, and nuanced writing could gradually come to be perceived as less authentic than writing that is looser or more irregular.

At that point, texts are no longer adapting to thought; thought itself is adapting to the mechanisms of control.

3. Producing a Text Is Not Necessarily Producing a Thought

Throughout the history of education, written work has often been used as an indirect proof of understanding.

Yet the emergence of AI reveals a distinction we have tended to overlook: a high-quality text is not always the sign of deep thinking, while a well-developed thought can perfectly well be expressed with the assistance of a tool.

The essential question is therefore no longer simply:

“Who wrote these sentences?”

It becomes:

“Who truly owns the ideas they express?”

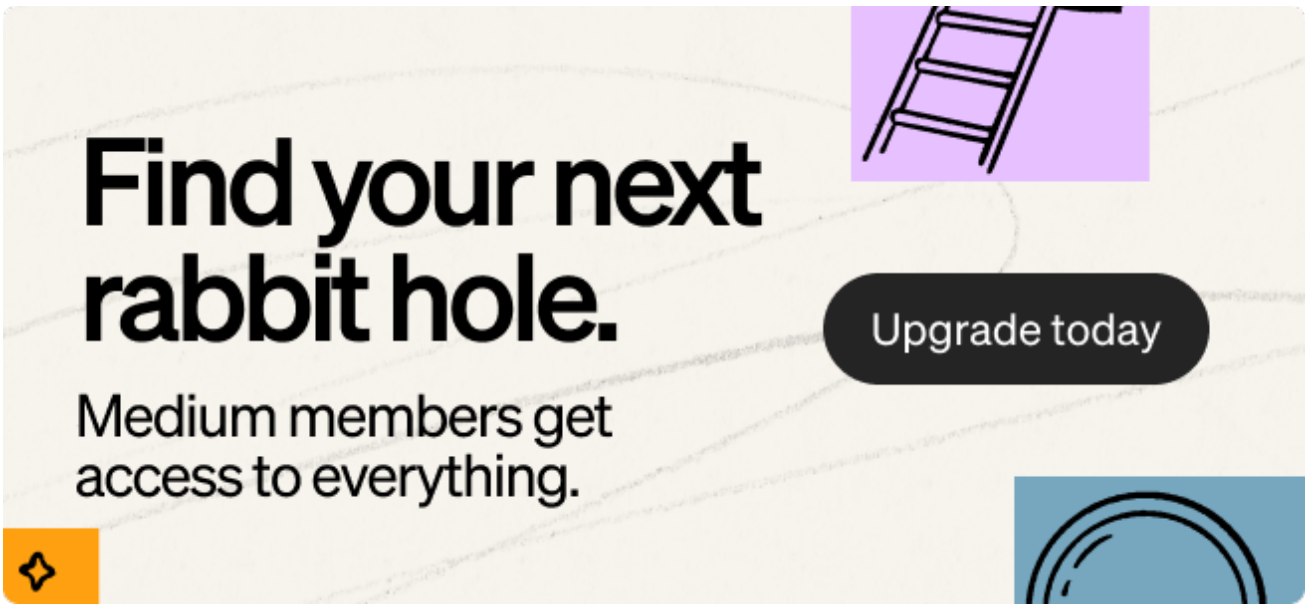
4. AI as an Interlocutor Rather Than a Substitute

Everything depends on how it is used.

AI can be used to bypass intellectual effort. It can also be used to extend it.

In the first case, it replaces reflection.

In the second, it acts as an interlocutor that helps clarify an intuition that is still incomplete, in a manner reminiscent of Socratic maieutics.



The difference does not lie in the technology itself, but in the attitude of the person using it.

5. Authorship, Editing, and Intellectual Responsibility

The image of the solitary author is largely a myth.

Books have always been the product of dialogue: with editors, proofreaders, readers, and sometimes secretaries or collaborators.

In literature as in science, no one creates in a vacuum. Every author inherits ideas, concepts, and discoveries that are then transformed in turn. A work is not

the spontaneous birth of an isolated thought, but a contribution to a conversation that began long before us and will continue long after us.

The question, therefore, is not whether an author has been influenced, advised, or assisted. It is how much of the thought being expressed truly belongs to that author and what contribution they bring to this collective conversation.

Editors often contribute to form without becoming the authors of the ideas themselves. Yet their influence can be considerable. They select manuscripts, request revisions, guide certain developments, and place a work within a particular editorial framework.

The name of the publishing house systematically accompanies that of the author. Its presence serves as a reminder that a published work is rarely the product of a single isolated individual.

AI introduces a comparable situation. It suggests, reformulates, and sometimes organizes. Yet it imposes no editorial agenda, pursues no interest of its own, and bears no intellectual responsibility.

That responsibility remains entirely with the author.

6. The Real Criterion

This intellectual responsibility may be the most fundamental criterion that remains relevant regardless of the tools being used.

The decisive question might be formulated quite simply:

Is the author capable of spontaneously explaining, defending, and taking responsibility for every idea contained in the text?

If the answer is yes, the assistance used matters less than the understanding achieved.

If the answer is no, then the problem already existed before the emergence of AI.

Conclusion

AI is neither an author, nor an editor, nor a mirror.

It does not create the ideas it formulates, it does not assume responsibility for

them, nor does it merely reflect them. Through dialogue, it returns formulations, objections, and questions that compel thought to become more precise.

The challenge today may no longer be to produce well-crafted texts, but to preserve the clarity and solidity of ideas.

In an age when forms of writing can be standardized or automated, the era of Cyrano is long gone — when Edmond Rostand had him declare, *"Perhaps not to rise very high, but all by myself!"* In other words, valuing solitary achievement above all else.

Today, when we write, we have access to dictionaries, spell-checkers, and even AI assistants that review our syntax while we are still questioning the clarity of our own thoughts.

For writing is an act of doubt.

To summarize this in an image:

Thought is a ball.

AI is a squash wall.

Words are the effects the ball acquires upon striking that wall.

And it is through that rebound that thought becomes more precise.

Azzedine Kaamil Aït-Ameur is an independent essayist.
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Artificial Intelligence I + Philosophy Of Science + Creativity +

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